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TAGS: PGOV PREL MARR CY TU

SUBJECT: TURKEY/CYPRUS: MFA TAKING WAIT AND SEE APPROACH ON NEGOTIATIONS

REF: NICOSIA 434

Classified By: Political Counselor Daniel O'Grady, Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) Summary and comment: In a June 27 meeting, MFA Cyprus Section Head Can Oztas told us the MFA remains supportive of current negotiations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, but has no plans to propose any concessions or gestures towards building momentum for a resolution. He rejected recommendations contained in the recent ICG report for Turkey to undertake unilaterally the opening of ports and airports to Greek Cypriot traffic, or to directly engage the Greek Cypriots. Expressing disappointment over perceived backsliding on the part of Christofias, Oztas cited the MOU between UK and ROC (reftel) and language contained in the UN report attendant to UNFICYP's mandate extension as indications that Christofias is unreliable. He rejected Christofias call for the removal of fifty percent of Turkish forces in the north, saying any reduction in Turkey's military presence, even a symbolic one, would happen only after an agreement has been reached, but might take place before public referenda on the agreement. Blaming the Greek Cypriot side for foot-dragging, Oztas indicated that Turkey did not expect full-fledged direct negotiations to begin until September. Oztas posited that Turkey's basic policy on Cyprus is unlikely to change, regardless of the outcome of the closure case against the AKP. End Summary.

No Mood to Be Flexible

¶2. (C) MFA Cyprus Section Head Can Oztas told us on June 27 that there are no policy discussions taking place in Ankara on steps Turkey should take to support the negotiations in Cyprus. He confirmed that Cyprus was not on the agenda during the National Security Council meeting on June 26. While acknowledging the May 23 statement by TRNC "President" Talat and ROC President Christofias was positive, Oztas noted that recent developments such as the UK-ROC MOU, and the language contained in the UNFICYP report associated with its mandate renewal (reftel - both documents omitted language concerning "two constituent states") indicated that Christofias was trying to distance himself from the May 23 statement and raised doubts about his reliability as a negotiating partner.

¶3. (C) Reacting to the June 23 International Crisis Group report, Oztas said Turkey has no plans to undertake any unilateral moves. He said implementation of the Ankara Protocol would occur when a settlement has been reached, not beforehand. Implementation, even on a provisional, limited,

partial basis is not being considered. Similarly, there are no plans to directly engage Greek Cypriot representatives.

Movement of Turkish Troops?

¶4. (C) Oztas reaffirmed the commitment to withdraw all but a residual amount of Turkish troops (650) from Cyprus on the basis of the Annan Plan upon reaching a settlement.

Referring to Christofias' call for Turkey to withdraw half of its troops, Oztas said Turkey would never contemplate such a move. Only if the two parties have reached agreement and only if the agreement is submitted for referenda might the Turkish military consider a symbolic troop reduction to build support for a settlement.

No Red Lines, Just "Dark Orange" Ones

¶5. (C) Talat has wide latitude in negotiating with the Greek Cypriots, and only in areas related to security does Ankara plan to engage, Oztas insisted. While maintaining that Ankara has no "red lines" in current negotiations, Oztas characterized two issues as "dark orange lines" for Turkey. First, there must be assurances that property restitution cases currently active in the European Court of Human Rights against Turkey will be withdrawn and no new cases would be filed. Second, all property restitution cases would be resolved on the island without involving Turkey. Unless such guarantees are made, Oztas reasoned, Turkey fears these cases will continue even after a final settlement. Oztas pointed to the Russians taking a similar position during negotiations

for the reunification of Germany.

No Major Changes Anticipated in Turkey's Cyprus Policy

¶6. (C) Regardless of the AKP closure case's outcome, Oztas viewed any dramatic shift in Turkey's Cyprus policy as unlikely. Oztas reiterated Turkey's support for the negotiations and view that the Annan Plan formed the basis of these talks. He expected full-fledged negotiations to begin in September, and blamed Greek Cypriot foot-dragging for the negotiations not starting sooner. Oztas said Talat wanted to start full-fledged negotiations in June, but Christofias pushed not to begin them until after August.

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